



MCCC 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Ike Leggett

Email: ikeleggett@verizon.net **Campaign Website:** www.ikeleggett.org

Office you are seeking: County Executive **District:** County

Years of residence in the district in which you are running: 44

Education Information

College, Post-graduate, Technical School or Certificate Program you completed and the degree(s) you attained.

BA Southern University MA, and JD Howard University Masters of Law. GeorgeWashington University LL.D

Employment Information

Current Occupation: I am currently in my second term as the County Executive. I also served four terms as an At-Large Member (1986 - 2002), and served as the Council's President three times (1991, 1998, 1999) and as its Vice-President three times (1990, 1997 and 2002). As a **Current Employer:** Montgomery County

How long have you been employed here? 8 years as County Executive

If less than two years, please provide immediate previous employer:

Questions

In your opinion, what are the key issues facing the business community in the district/county/state you seek to represent?

Emerging from the recent recession and beginning to build, expand, and grow jobs. That is why my focus is on two strategies: fostering smart growth and empowering the businesses in our County through targeted economic initiatives and funding strategies. The future health of our County depends on growing jobs. My Smart Growth initiative is turning an old industrial area into a thriving Urban Village near the Shady Grove Metro. This initiative is fostering increased development, and along with my push for Smart Growth in the White Flint, Great Seneca Science Corridor, Wheaton and White Oak Science Gateway areas, is creating more than 100,000 quality jobs here in the County. The signs of a healthy building industry – construction cranes – are evident throughout our County. This Smart Growth focus is by far creating more jobs than at any other period in the County's history. Focusing our growth has also helped lay the foundation for improving our transportation network, with funding either in place or coming in the near future for the Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), and the Rapid Transit Vehicle (RTV) system. I worked aggressively last year to secure over \$1 billion State dollars to move our major county transportation projects forward, and I will continue to push for additional funding for these important transportation priorities in the years ahead. Through our

County's Economic Development Fund Grant & Loan Program/Technology Growth Program, I have committed more than \$50.74 million to 47 companies; the funds will be paid over 15 years if the companies meet negotiated milestones. Our economic development efforts have produced results: • 9,936 new jobs; • 27,217 retained jobs; • 1,683,092 square feet of new commercial space; and • \$1.7 billion in new capital investments. Today, despite the economic downturn felt most significantly from 2008-2010, Montgomery County has more than 33,000 private sector businesses. Employment in the County grew between 2010 and 2013 by an estimated 32,530 jobs - from 629,591 jobs in 2010 to 662,121 jobs of 2013. That represents a 5.2% job growth rate. During the same period, job growth in Fairfax City & County was 3.7% and the District of Columbia was 3.5% (based on EMSI data). I successfully reversed the trend of uncontrolled county government spending that escalated by 42% in the four years immediately before I assumed office. During the recent unprecedented recession, I was able to close \$2.7 billion in budgetary gaps, and now, our County is back on the road to financial health.

What do you believe are the core responsibilities of the position you seek and what will you do to carry these out?

The core responsibilities of the County Executive are to provide a sustainable budget recommendation for the county. I also want to foster a strong and vibrant economy to ensure strong schools, safe communities, effective transportation, and healthy and sustainable communities. Building on what's best starts with the County's crown jewel – our public schools. Of everything that we do to strengthen the County, the most important investment that we make is in our nearly 150,000 public school students. Although the public schools account for more than half of the entire County budget, they are the foundation for an infinitely larger share of the County's future. When families think about moving to Montgomery County and when companies consider location options, they take notice of our 35 National Blue Ribbon schools. They also are aware that our SAT scores are 153 points above the national average combined score, and that we had 137 National Merit Scholar semifinalists last year. Our County is now safer than it was when I took office. Serious crime is down 33%, three times the decrease in crime nationally. I worked aggressively in Annapolis to secure over a billion State dollars to move our major county transportation projects forward, including the Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transit way, our Rapid Transit Vehicle system, and numerous highway projects. I have also invested in libraries, recreation, and affordable housing to enhance the quality of life for all our residents. My Positive Youth Initiative provides positive after-school opportunities for at-risk youth, intervention strategies to keep young people out of gangs. My proposed budget includes \$68.5 million to support after school programs for children and youth to help them achieve both academically, and holistically.

Please explain your budget priorities and describe your approach to the role you will play in impacting the County/State budget.

1. Education - I believe that the county, in collaboration with the school system must work together to close the academic achievement gap. In order to continue to attract businesses into Montgomery County, we must continue to maintain and improve the crown jewel of the county - our public school system. Failure to maintain a quality school system would significantly harm our county's stature and negatively impact our economy. In working closely with our State Delegation, over the last seven years, I have brought home \$262 million in school construction funding, \$60 million more than the County received in the prior seven years. In the eight years I have been County Executive, Montgomery has received \$4.1 billion in State school operating dollars, more than twice the State school funding awarded to our County in the prior eight years. 2. Fostering additional Smart Growth and expanding our transportation network as I outlined in a previous question. Focusing our growth has also helped lay the foundation for improving our transportation network, with funding either in place or coming in the near future for the Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), and the Rapid Transit Vehicle (RTV) system. Again, I worked aggressively last year in Annapolis to secure over one billion State dollars to move our major county transportation projects forward, and I will continue to push for additional funding for these important transportation priorities in the years ahead. 3. Housing - I will work to

increase the supply of affordable housing for our residents. I firmly believe that affordable housing is critical to our success as a community. Families need the stability that an affordable home provides. We know that this stability can have a profound effect on children and their performance in school. Affordable housing is also a key factor in building economic success by helping businesses attract and retain employees. That is why I will continue to make a priority of increasing affordable housing. Even during the difficult times during our Great Recession, the County built or acquired over 12,000 affordable housing units —this is more than any other amount in a similar period in our county's history.

What improvements do you believe are needed to the transportation infrastructure In Montgomery County and Maryland? Please list them in your priority order.

One of our top priorities should be advancing mass transit, which includes Purple Line and Corridor City Transitway. While I am a strong proponent of walkable Smart Growth development that will rely heavily on transit, I believe certain road projects are critical to meeting our transportation needs, especially in our Smart Growth areas like White Flint. I have funded over \$170 million in road improvements in the White Flint redevelopment district. I am a strong advocate for BRT. I convened the Bus Rapid Transit Task Force in 2011 to develop recommendations for a BRT network in Montgomery County. The Task Force recommended a system to create a comprehensive transit network across the County, providing both north and south, as well as east and west, transportation opportunities. I also launched the Pedestrian Safety Initiative in December, 2007, to outline a comprehensive blueprint for pedestrian safety. This significantly enhanced the County's investment in educating motorists and pedestrians to prevent pedestrian injury. Last year's operating budget included \$7.4 million for pedestrian safety initiatives, and the Capital Improvements Program included \$60.4 million. In addition, I am committed to providing safe pathways to County schools for all of our children. The County initiated a full assessment of all schools, identifying where safety improvements were most needed to afford students a safe route to their schools. I have added extensively to bikeway projects. I also launched the new Bikeshare program, which now has 43 locations around the County. We have to examine our north-south and east-west corridors because improving both our critical. In the east county area, the 29 corridor and Georgia Avenue are particular routes where there is work to do. The Rockville Pike and I-270 are of concern in the west county. As far as east-west routes, East West Highway and the Beltway need solutions that will ease congestion. As the ICC matures, it will be important to work with the state to see if the speed limit and toll rates could make it a more effective road.

If elected, how do you plan to address the perception and reality of Montgomery County and Maryland having a less competitive business climate?

The county needs to continue to work to ensure that our regulations and taxes and development review process is easier and less costly and less time consuming. Accordingly we have reduced the number of fees and substantially altered the development review process and continue to work to find more efficiencies and improvements. In addition, we need to make certain that the real story of Montgomery County is clearly articulated to the public. For example, Montgomery continues to outpace our neighbors in Fairfax County and the District of Columbia in job growth. Since 2010, Montgomery has increased job growth at a pace of 5.2%, compared to Fairfax at 3.7% and 3.5% in DC. Our Department of Economic Development has a strong partnership with our Chambers of Commerce and the Montgomery County Business Development Corporation, and will continue to market Montgomery County as a great place to do business with an educated workforce, great schools, and a county that is an excellent partner on numerous development projects. In addition, Montgomery County has some of the most innovative economic development incentives and programs to attract grow and retain businesses, including: Biotech Investment Tax Credit Program: Montgomery County is the first local jurisdiction in the country to have this program. Green Investment Incentive Program: the County supplements up to 50% of a recipient's investment in a qualified green organization. Cyber security Investment Incentive Tax Credit Supplement Program: Montgomery County's latest local tax incentive program is aimed at spurring job and business growth in the ever-critical cyber security sector, enacted on October 1, 2013.

National Cyber security Center of Excellence: U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski secured \$10 million in federal appropriations as part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's FY12 budget to create this new Center in Montgomery County to encourage cyber security-related technology transfer. BioHealth Innovation, Inc. (BHI): BHI is a regional innovation intermediary formed to connect market relevant research assets in central Maryland to appropriate funding, management and markets to assist in the development of commercially viable bio health products and companies. In addition, I have invested and created many small business incentives: Local Small Business Reserve Program (LSBRP): In FY13, \$45 million in contracts were awarded to LSBRP contractors, an amount that represented 38% of all eligible contracts. Small Business Plus!: Nearly \$36 million in County deposits are spread among local banks headquartered in the County. In return for these investments, the participating banks will commit an equal amount, dedicating some \$70 million to be used for loans to local businesses to spur job creation. Technical and Business Assistance: FY13, DED organized over 90 technical assistance events and training, with over 1,400 business officials attending these events. DED also assisted 319 companies in FY13 with 520 business issues such as permitting, contracting, real estate, utilities and marketing related matters. Business Innovation Network (BIN): The County's business incubator program consists of 5 facilities that house 139 companies with 780 employees. Small Business Navigator position in DED: Created in 2013, this position assists small businesses in working through government bureaucracy.

How do you define economic development?

From a government perspective, it is to assist the private sector in creating jobs and grow the tax base by creating an environment that is more competitive and encouraging for business to locate in Montgomery County and stay here.

What role should government play to help attract, grow and retain business?

By making certain that the business community understands fully that Montgomery County is open for business. Our Department of Economic Development has aggressively recruited companies of all sizes to come to Montgomery County and stay here. We have invested tens of millions of dollars to be regionally competitive in competition for new businesses. To foster growth of not only new businesses but new industries we have implemented and grown incubators for "green," biotech and cyber security entrepreneurs

What current economic development initiatives do you support?

As listed above, I support a combination of targeted incentives, such as tax credits and economic development funding assistance. In addition, I also recently initiated a major cross-agency effort involving the Department of Permitting Services, Maryland National Park and Planning Commission, related State and County agencies, and WSSC to streamline the development review and approval process. This initiative has shaved up to a year off the development process for a number of projects. In addition, the County reduced the building fees for Type V construction (mid-rise wood frame construction) and reduced permit automation fees by 50%.

What new economic development initiatives would you propose?

Local Cyber security Investment Incentive Tax Credit Supplement –My latest local tax incentive program is aimed at spurring job and business growth in the ever-critical cyber security sector. Local companies designated as a Qualified Maryland Cyber security Company (QMCC) that receive a final tax credit certificate for the Maryland cyber security investment tax credit are eligible for the local supplement the following year. MOVE (Make Office Vacancies Extinct) – This new program continues support for the County's innovation economy. MOVE is an innovative program targeted at attracting emerging technology companies to the County. Our local real estate sector has told us they believe it will make a difference and help them fill existing, vacant office space throughout the County," said County Executive Ike Leggett. The program will reduce Class A and B office vacancies by offering a \$4 per square foot rent assistance for year

one on new commercial leases of at least three years and at least 2,000 square feet to companies that are newly formed in or relocate to the County. Our projections show that every \$250,000 in rent abatements through the MOVE program will yield about 15 new business formations or attractions in the County, with an estimated 250 to 320 new jobs.

Please use this opportunity to provide any other information you would like MCCC members to know.